

# The great germ warfare that wasn't

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and **LES WHITTEN**

**WASHINGTON**—Apparently, the United States and Cuba planned to wage germ warfare against one another's livestock a few years back. The Senate Intelligence Committee is already investigating the startling charge that the CIA spread African swine fever in Cuba. The disease devastated the island's pig population. Now we have learned that the Cubans had a scheme of their own to infest U.S. cattle with hoof-and-mouth disease. The idea eventually was abandoned, but in April, 1962, Cuban Politburo member Antonio Nunez Jimenez discussed the hoof-and-mouth plot with four top Cuban scientists.

The amazing story has been buried in Intelligence documents, which we have now seen. Nunez Jimenez informed the four scientists, according to an intelligence memo, "that Cuba was now ready to give the United States a 'dose of its own medicine.'"

"Nunez Jimenez further explained," continued the memo, "that Cuba had the ability, through specially trained agents, to destroy the cattle industry of the United States by spreading an epizootic fever known commonly as 'hoof-and-mouth disease.'" A hoof-and-mouth epidemic would have forced the destruction of the infected cattle. An outbreak in the United States in 1929 and in Mexico in 1946 wiped out millions worth of livestock.

Federal agents, alarmed at the first-person account of Nunez Jimenez' threat, made further inquiries and found that "the Cuban government had opened a bacteriological laboratory in Soroa, Pinar del Rio Province." This secret lab, "located in the former orchid gardens of Soroa," was run by a Spanish exile named Dr. Martinez Viera. He was assisted by a Cuban and a former American resident. The latter was a woman who washed the test tubes and vials used by Dr. Viera, reported the memo.

At the time of the memo, written in 1963, it appeared that "Nunez Jimenez had made arrangements for three Soviet bacteriologists to take over the laboratory." One purpose of the lab, interestingly, was to "determine the cause of an epidemic which completely destroyed the birds of a turkey farm." However, we can find no evidence that the turkeys,

like a reported 500,000 Cuban pigs, may have been the victims of CIA germ warfare.

There is no longer any question about it: both the FBI and CIA withheld essential facts from the Warren Commission about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

We have now learned, for example, that the FBI had in its files at least 69 reports on the pre-assassination activities of Lee Harvey Oswald. Only 46 of these were summarized for the Warren Commission; the remaining 23 were held back.

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The CIA also provided the commission with selective information and covered up critical facts. Indeed, congressional investigators say the CIA deliberately lied about some of the details that were furnished to the commission.

During the closing weeks of the last Congress, the House established a special assassination committee, which has barely started its investigation of the Kennedy killing. Yet its investigators have already interviewed about two dozen key witnesses who had never been questioned previously. They included people who had actually witnessed the shooting and the scene afterward inside the Dallas hospital. Sources with important information in Mexico City and Miami were also interviewed for the first time.

The Washington Post \_\_\_\_\_  
Washington Star-News \_\_\_\_\_  
Daily News (New York) P. 30  
The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
The National Observer \_\_\_\_\_  
The Los Angeles Times \_\_\_\_\_

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